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VERT REVIEW review review review

CALVERT REVIEW WINTER 1967-1968

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Cover stock: Beckett Cover, Gray
Inside stock: Beckett Text Laid, Gray and White
Typefaces: Text 10 and 12 point Electra (Linotype)
Heads: Corvinus Medium (American Type)
Printed by The John D. Lucas Printing Co., Baltimore, Md. 21211

Being about to hatch an egg
She was beautiful with it, and
(not like lots of birds who just spread
their wings and expect the old egg to follow
nature's course)
Her pecks and claws pushed it
    end-up-in-the-middle-of-the-nest where,
Fondling with her wings,
She gave promise of that yet ungiven
Holy Mother the Church safe-in-the-sacristy
    warmth
        which
Was Soon,
        her wings spread,
But (unlike those placid, self-justifying
"Foul"-Nature birds) she still
    clawed
    and fondled
        until that p-r-o-m-i-s-i-n-g
            slight first egg chip
                got lost-in-a-pulsing-smashup
                    of scattered chips
                    (and chirps of joy)
                        wind-
        ing up
            with
    the egg,
Done-in,
    and the bird (again, unlike)
Pecking from her new offsprung
                    old feathers,
                    unused yolk,
    until it sat,
Tiny&clean&beaming
In-the-middle-of the nest,
Both birds sing-
        ing at the won-
        der of off-
            sprung.

—*Bart Gruzalski*

Billy Budd Revisited

I pushed down on the aeeelerator. I had three of my best paintings strapped on the baek of my ear and the sky looked like rain. Besides that, I was late for elass. As soon as my foot touehed the gas pedal, smoke started billowing up through the floor. Everything happened so fast I didn't really have time to think, but I automatieally drove a half bloek more to the nearest serviee station. I loathe people who stop their ears in the middle of interseetions. Even if it was a matter of seeonds before the whole thing exploded . . . I can't say I wasn't seared. As far as I was eoneerned, it eould have exploded a half bloek baek down the road. The attendant must have seen me eoming for he was approaehing my ear as I flung the door open and serambled out of my seat. I was really shaking now and my voiee quivered.

As I told the man in the grease-stained blue overalls what had happened, the smoke eleared. The man squinted his eyes and bent his head inside the ear. "Nothing on fire," he said. Then he sniffed and informed me that I had burnt my eluteh out. "You ean tell by the smell," he said.

It's hard to explain how I felt. I was bewildered at first. I didn't know what to do. I stammered when I tried to talk. "What should I do?" I asked. It was a stupid question. I was asking myself really, but the grease-stained man heard me and I suppose he felt obliged to answer. He didn't tell me what to do. He told me that he couldn't fix it . . . that he wasn't equipped to do any major repair work. So I just stood there looking at the gray eumulus elouds and I asked again, "What should I do?"

"You'll need a new eluteh," he said, then walked away. I guess he thought I was going to ery. I guess he thought it was stupid erying over a elutch. Well, it wasn't the eluteh that I eared about . . . it was the money. I had just enough money to pay for next semester's tuition. A new eluteh would eost elose to a hundred dollars. That's two-thirds of my tuition money. My head began to feel all blaek and heavy inside as I realized my situation. The only way to raise more money was to work, but I wouldn't. I knew that. I worked part-time during sehool last year and I hated it. I hated work and I hated school.

The elouds were breaking and small patehes of blue were visible, but the wind was growing eolder. I had only a eardigan sweater over my dress. I pulled it tight around me and started walking toward the door of the station. I didn't go in. I was looking for a pay phone. There wasn't one inside so I walked baek to the ear.

My ear was still sitting there like the great sphinx. The grill was grinning. I walked back over to the garage where the attendant was working. I asked him if I could drive the ear to get it to a repair shop. He said probably . . . "It might make it. It might not." I asked him where a pay phone was. I hated to be alone in situations when I wasn't sure of myself. I erossed the driveway to the phone booth and ealled my mother. I don't know why. She didn't drive. I just wanted to talk to her. The line was busy. I hung up, then put the dime baek in the phone and dialed my neighbor. She had a ear, but there was no answer. I walked baek to the garage and asked the man if I eould leave my ear there until about 5:30 at whieh time I eould get someone to help me. He said

"Yeh." Then I asked him if he would be so kind as to take my paintings inside if it started raining. He nodded his head, but I knew he wouldn't.

I pulled my sweater tight again and folded my arms in front of me, burying my fingers in the sweater. The wind was cold as I walked down the road toward the bus terminal. It was certainly lousy not having a car. I couldn't go to school without a car. I couldn't very well carry a 4' by 5' painting on the bus.

The bus terminal was really in a dilapidated section of town. They didn't even clean the streets here. Paper was blowing in the gutters and on the sidewalks. It wasn't a big terminal. It wasn't a big town. There were six people waiting for buses, five women and one man. The man was sitting on the only bench and no one would sit down beside him because he was so dirty and smelly looking. I didn't sit down either, but only because I was cold and I wanted to keep moving. The women all wore coats.

I walked up to a big woman wearing a nurse's uniform and an old grey flannel coat. She was smiling and her teeth were yellow and crooked. There was something funny about her left eye; it didn't move. She had a glass eye. I asked if she knew when the K-8 bus came. Like one who had taken the bus every day for twenty years, she replied, "Every hour on the hour." It was quarter past three. The sky was completely overcast again. I was freezing and I had forty-five minutes to wait. The big woman went on talking about how the girls didn't get off until 3 o'clock (I guess she was one of the girls) and how the bus came at three and they usually missed it and had to wait a whole hour. "You know that other bus driver," she addressed a short fat lady with red hair, "he would always wait for us. You know, I told him one day . . ." she started laughing . . . "I told him that I was going to call up the transit company and tell them how nice he was . . ." She was really laughing loud now. "I told him I was going to do that. I did."

I gathered from her conversation that we were waiting for the same bus. I also figured that she wasn't a full-fledged nurse. She said something about cleaning up, but she did work in a hospital.

I walked away from her. She was interesting with her glass eye and all, but I didn't feel like listening to her laugh. I was in a quiet, meditative mood. I walked around in circles, my hands behind me, looking at my feet. I started walking around the bench where the old man sat. I walked around it several times, then I stopped to the side of him and just stared at him for a while. He acted as if I wasn't even there. He just stared out into space with glassy eyes and with a pout on his lips. That's what he looked like, an old senile man pouting about something no one will ever know about because it's all within himself. Only this man wasn't that old in years. He might not have even been fifty, but his hair had some grey in it and his neck was all red and wrinkled. I felt something for him. I don't know what exactly. I felt something for all of these people. I felt sort of sorry for them . . . not because they were poor, but because they lived such dull, routine lives. Even this derelict lived a routine life being derelict. I started kicking my shoe in the dirt. The bus terminal was really just a vacant lot with weeds grown up in the back and dirt in the front. There was a big area of dirt about fifteen feet long and ten feet wide. The

bench with the derelict was right on the edge of the area and he was facing toward the dirt, which was strange in itself since most people would face the street so that they could see the buses coming. He had a very unique face. He looked Irish. His face was round and red with a short, turned up nose. He looked like an Irish derelict sitting on a bench in Dublin, slouching forward, staring glassy eyed at a patch of dirt. I would like to have drawn him, but I didn't have any paper and besides, my hands were too cold to hold a pencil. I stood staring at him, kicking the ground. I was wasting my time waiting for this bus. I hated to wait when I didn't have anything to do. I had to think of something to do.

Looking down at the ground, I smudged out the marks I had made and walked over to the center of this area of dirt. I stretched my leg out and dug my heel into the earth. I dragged my heel, digging out the contour lines of a face in profile. It didn't look like the man on the bench, which had been my intention. The drawing was too clear cut. I couldn't reproduce the man's complex features; his weathered, wrinkled skin and the look in his eyes. There was so much behind his outward appearance. I couldn't capture that with the heel of my shoe. But I didn't stop. The face I had drawn was big, about two feet long. It was a young face with a strong jaw. I decided to give him some hair. "This will be beautiful," I smiled to myself. I gave him long windblown hair that fell past his ears. Being a romantic, I liked long hair. His neck I made slender and outstretched and he looked as though he were reaching or trying to see above a crowd. I stepped back. This was crazy. I felt the eyes of the women on my back. I'll give them a show, I thought. I'll liven up their dreary lives.

Glancing over at the bum, his eyes focused on the ground, I figured he was looking at my drawing. I laughed. These people have probably never seen anything like this before. I decided to put more expression in my drawing's face. It was difficult to control my foot. He had sad eyes, but I did not want him to appear totally sad so I curved his lips into a smile. Then he looked more complex, more real. I twisted his torso into a frontal view, Egyptian style. I was getting hung-up on the drawing. It was no longer a joke. It wasn't at all a bad drawing, considering the medium. The more I added to the drawing, the more it meant to me. I didn't know what it meant, but I did respond to it with an emotion. It was crazy and I could not explain it and I didn't really take the time to think about it. It was sort of like love, if that means anything. I don't know whether it was love for the drawing or for what it represented or for the people standing around or for me or for the whole world, but in any case, it was a response to what I was doing, so I went on.

I made his arms outstretched like Christ blessing the multitudes. But he wasn't Christ. I didn't want him to be Christ himself. There wasn't enough room for his legs so I left him with just the waist up. I stepped back on the sidewalk and looked at it. Fantastic. "Do you see it?" I felt like shouting. "Do you hear him? Do you understand what he's saying?" I turned around. Everyone was looking at me. I felt embarrassed. The drawing was rather primitive and whatever it meant, it wasn't so profound. My classmates would have thought

it naive. But there people weren't my classmates. Surely these people wouldn't think it naive. "Look, you people," I felt like shouting, "I'm doing this for you."

I smiled at the woman with the glass eye. She smiled back, showing her decayed teeth. Turning around, I had to do something else. I started digging out flowers around his head. I kept adding row upon row of flowers until the whole area of dirt was covered except for a strip a foot wide at the top of the mural, which is what it was now, a dirt mural. I stepped back. "God! A Masterpiece," I said out loud. I didn't turn around to see the expressions of the women. The derelict was still staring at the ground. Now, I thought, I have to top it off with something really great for posterity. I envisioned some scholar walking by and seeing this masterpiece and writing a novel about the psychology of the person who did it.

Well, I couldn't think of anything to put. I wanted to say something, but I didn't know what or how to say it. As I was trying to think, I noticed a bus approaching in the distance. I couldn't leave the drawing unfinished so I walked up to the strip and started to dig out letters. The ground here was close to the grass and the earth was darker so that the letters stood out clear and legible. I think it was my drawing's hair that put the words in my head and it was close enough to what I wanted to say. I wrote across the whole fifteen feet in letters a foot high, "God bless Captain Vere."

Perhaps it was stupid, but I didn't think so and I still don't. At any rate, the drawing was finished as the bus pulled up, but it wasn't my bus. Three girls got off of this bus and a couple of the women who were standing there got on. The girls were cheap. You could tell at first glance. They all three had black leather jackets and black stockings. Two of the girls had dyed black hair while one had bleached blonde. Their eyes were overly made up with black eyebrow pencil and mascara and they were chewing gum. One girl laughed and pushed her friend off the bus. She pushed her again off the sidewalk onto my mural. I watched with apprehension as they walked on the flowers, but then the blonde screeched, "Hey, look! Look at this. We're stepping on something!" "Hey," said another. I started smiling. I couldn't help it. I guess I was proud.

They stepped back off the dirt and looked at my drawing. Then one of the girls stepped in my boy's head and started kicking the dirt. The other two followed and they laughed as they stomped the ground. They didn't know I was watching. They didn't know I had created what they were destroying. I looked at the woman with the glass eye. She turned away suddenly as though she didn't want me to see her looking at me. I look at the derelict. He was looking at the girls expressionless.

Another bus pulled up. It still wasn't mine. The three girls climbed on. I wanted to say something to them. I wanted to really give them a jolt, but there were no words. I wanted to say something to the woman wih the glass eye, but I didn't. I just turned toward the vacant lot and squinted my eyes so I couldn't see.

The K-8 bus pulled up behind the one that the three girls had gotten on.

The woman with the glass eye and two of her friends climbed up the steps. I ran across the vacant lot to where a bunch of weeds were growing and picked a tiny blue flower. "People think you're a weed," I said. "I don't think you're a weed. I think you're a very noble flower and you shall perform a very noble task." I ran back toward the bus, dropping the flower in the center of the dirt.

As the bus pulled away, I looked out the window. The man with the red neck was still sitting on the bench. I imagined seeing him years later, turned to stone, sitting on the bench surrounded by tiny blue flowers.

As I walked in the door of my house my mother asked me what happened to my ear and how I got home. I started telling her about the woman with the glass eye and the man with the red neck and the girls with their dyed black hair and black eyes and black coats and black stockings and about Billy Budd and how he was so innocent.

—*Linda Thrift*

LOVE'S LAW

How do I love you, child?
Enough to make you free?
Play with a crayon, child.
It was enough for me.

Tomorrow while you draw
I'll try to dream again,
And while you frame Love's Law
I'll stroke my chin.

—*Gary Imlay*

The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian

Act I

The sunset knits its fevered brows along
The immeasurable skies—in soft embrace
With the blushing mountain snows, whose drifting song
Laments our unresisting fall from grace,
Braiding her hoary tresses o'er each space
Where once the undeclining verdure sprung;
The carven rocks the echoes softly trace
Of sunken sounds spontaneously wrung,
When grass caressing grass, love's oracle had sung.

I'd pale before the sun's transfixed lightning,
Riving the earth with fingers far a-spread,
As if my arching back could somehow wring
A breath of truth from the generically dead
Soil: afar, the twilight's gentle hues have shed
Their peace, slow saddening round the sun's dim eye,
Crippled clouds—their meridian glory fled
Subdues the orb whose long lingering sigh
Burns through the gathered glooms of night's impendent sky.

These austere remnants of dream-descrted boughs
Need not borrow any grace my words may give,
Beautiful in the blight of broken vows
And sufficient unto themselves, they live
As if their blackened branches were a sieve
Through which the clouds discharge their snows:
Shriven as their staunch forms, they will I yet believe
Confer the benefits the mind has given,
And touch the wasted earth with the hues of Heaven.

There is a gentle grace which lives around me
The spirit of an idea ever enfolds
Itself and in silent successions found me:
A partial presence twisted in the holds
Of divided being—those separate molds
Of self that we cling to—that settled state
Of a vanished mood when our brooding scolds
Our thoughts into doubt or guilt: When we imprecate
Our own misjudging selves and wrongly call it fate.

Then what is our fate, but the constant, sorrow,
And the variable fears which haunt our hearts
And with desolated wings waft on the morrow,
Watching the sullen path on which departs
That disunited dream which swiftly starts
With a quick sense through passing humankind.
And what are these but the external darts
Inflicted when the spirit is confined,
Deluded by the mass which its own self defined.

Did we not know the images perceived
By our minds, would take on the varied hues
Which from our sullied souls had been conceived:
Why weep, though the Heavens have fresher dews
Than these which nurture the ever-mourning yews:
'Twas we ourselves that formed this shapeless mass
'Twas we our unrewarding woes would fuse
Into a blight, or channelled o'er they'd pass
In ever-moaning thunder presaging nature's blast.

To see my blood polish these herbless stones,
To strain my sinews 'neath the mocking skies,
To hear the thunder answering my moans,
To feel within me such reprisals rise
As doubt the formulas our thoughts devise—
Conditioned by the pains of humankind:
Consigned to self by time's glowering eyes,
How can the heart in rent referral find
The center where each subject in arms will be divined?

And yet these pains have not been idly born,
But with a mind aware of its alloy
Though free to flash the pillared teeth of scorn
On life's accumulated ruins—I joy
In what the self-contained of men destroy:
The tragic turning of the skies, the sounds
Far-off of twilight carollers, the coy
Blossom which broadens all unseen, confounds
The aching senses as the summoned spirit bounds.

But from my withered heart I cannot fashion
What effigies of endless longing claim,
They seem but remnants of some pallid passion
To moek a gentle grace without a name—
A grace, whieh now does expiate its flame,
And though I gladly burned, it left me charred:
Me, whose fondest hope has turned a martyr's fame,
Deserted by my dreams, the winds have marred
With too prolonged intensity, what Heaven's self has barred.

Yet I ean hold a mirror to my soul,
And cireumseribe within a paradise,
Cast out beyond these detaehed elogs which roll,
I see apart—as all things colonize
Convoluting round my enjoining eyes,
Whieh eannot ehoose but to see all converge
Into One being—else I'd myself despise:
Upon the blandishments of life's dark surge,
An unavailing wave which rock-hewn waters urge.

For is it that this sea's sterility
Fostered my fatal fingerings of the land,
Appending through this cyclie travesty
Until these dominionless eyes expand
Through falling hairs towards a nobler band,
As though intention's final form were ours:
We who rise to feel, and feeling planned
And planning feeling fell—our spirit eowers
In the deeaying earth not the resultant bowers.

I'd plunge into earth's swarming solitudes
And touch life's turning groove with treble tongue,
And in time's systems shape eternal moods:
But all I say more nobly has been sung
All I offer more profusely has been wrung
From deeper realms, and yet I eannot shun
With heedless glanee the generating dung
Of man. I could not, when all was said and done
Refrain to soothe this sunflower which could not see the sun.

To rouse our dreams in rich melodic lines
To see our phantasies reshape the stone
(Suggesting that for which the world repines)
I've sought in others, but have been alone
Or so it seems, for no answering moan
Of sweetest sustenance has spread a mat
Of healing blooms for that transmitted tone
Which I yet feel, and feeling so begat
Through metaphors of madness all man has revelled at.

For Socrates dreamt of an archetype
Which the varying moon shall run into,
Perhaps because his love had not grown ripe
Or the amours of his life had been too few:
In this same way the unslaked poet drew
A dream from out the odour-laden air
Which gave the grace on earth he never knew:
Who would have dreamt these works of art so fair
Were born and battered out in a rage of proud despair.

Who has ever tasted pleasure unalloyed
With pain, or never felt earth's element
Of antipathies ceaselessly has cloyed
Love's visitations and whate're they've lent
Of harmony to life's dull instrument.
Yet man has transcribed tones, which half-revealed
Blossom upon his intricate lament:
A winter blooming rose which has repealed
With passion's two-edged sword, mind's unimpassioned shield.

And yet we've flown to tipsy bacchanals
Steeping anguish in wine-pressed revelries
Forgetting thankless time but half-allows
One hour of mirth to sorrow's stern decrees
When flowing joy congeals and seems to freeze
Upon our unslaked lips, and we would page
A Ganymede for pleasures new: we seize
The caustic beat of procreation's rage
Which pounds life's palsied forms from youth to withered age.

The sky is doubled as a single gash
Extends across her tempest-tortured side,
Where pour her lightnings forth in fiery flash
And tears from throat of thunder thrusted wide
A distincter groan—as though the night defied
Pain to find a voice: A chorus of hills
In one resurgent rumble are allied:
'Tis thus to ease the breast the heart instills
In nature's second self our corollary ills.

There grows on me a correspondent thrall
Cannot my busiest thoughts somehow dispell
These undeclining fears which weave their wall
Of horrid clamours: oh for some drowsy dell
Of wide-eyed enchantment and summer swell
Of snow-nursed streams—but no, the clouds have cast
Their destined lightnings and spume their spell:
They come, they come as impalpably they pass
Like unrelenting storms which scatter but to remass:

Chorus of Furies:

Strophe:

There is a want—you cannot claim
Love's undeveloped sigh as thine
Nor loose the tear which hides your shame
Nor feel the wind sweep through the pine.
And yet you faintly trace a sign
Of meaning when from far away
The flowering fields seem all divine
But close are weeds in foul decay.

The mournful meaning of the skies
But wears the mood your passions give,
Yet all revolves, subsides and dies
Should you in brighter aspect live?
Your woes were drained from nature's sieve
Your pains were racked by human art
Whose passing joys are relative
Whose mirth's a deadening of the heart.

Antistrophe:

Each his several fear projects
Into the ruin time elects
To free from overbearing strain
The guilt that floundered through his brain,
And to another pass the cause
That made his fluttering heart to pause
With grief, reproach and devious pride
'Til he his inmost pang denied.
The kingdoms of the earth outspread
By man's causating heart were fed
Converting circumstantial hate
To the tremours of a foreign state,
'Til time her flaming gown did wind
And with her transient crowns did bind
Each brow that made his inmost curse
The blight of our dim universe,
Then the ancestral seed of man
Pronounced the word which soon outran
That glorious dress which first did seem
The light that made the world to gleam,
Until that selfsame alchemy
Of Medea's conjured enmity
Into his fevered brow did burn
Clamped in the world's revolving urn:
All things are bowed beneath the brows
Of knitted change, what time allows
Tempts pursuit with solemn eyes
Then fades in autumn litanies.
Thus on your unreclining head
We place the thorns your thoughts have bred:
That the world is not defined,
But a frenzy of the mind;
That hills which hush when love's soft sound
Plants peace into the very ground,
Must clasp their latest autumn prey
And weep that all must end this way;
That silence is a cell for each
Caught in the contours of his speech;
That these separate solitudes
Where no reviving ray intrudes,
Are nothing more than they do seem
The wrecks of an abandoned dream:
For can the unrecounting snow
Feel your blood within it flow,
Can wisdom be but relative,
Suffer our last refrain: Why live?

Shrieks, horrid clamours, inarticulate moans,
Let these be my language: the tale I've told
Is echoed back by twice redoubled groans,
But still my heart, with adamant of gold
Would bar all spirits with footsteps overbold
Who dare abjure their inordinate abodes
And with their unfulfilling claims unfold
Life's tapestry—which to ceaseless action goads
The wisest till their genius burns and then corrodes.

But still they come in dreadful clangours dire
Displacing with their dusky wings that calm
Which masked the grovelling glory of desire
And paved our spirit's undiscerning helm
With dreams that walk the waters, thus we whelm
Our wants in thoughts which hide the hell we are:
My brow was never made to feel the balm
Of woman's hand or pulsing morning star
But my salacious soul wears well its settled scar.

Still I grasp, still I reach beyond this realm
Of dream, climbing life's crags unheedingly,
All receding further my spirit's helm
Can temper not this circumfluent sea
With that (environed round the shadows flee,
The dim conceivings of my adverting mind)
Which blots the blooms of my transient tree
Dowering my eyes which this cycle defined
The stray particulars in One being to bind.

Where is then the available essence
In which to pass, though I'd hang withering here
I'd people the universe with the excrescence
Of an inviolable mind, each year
Elegized by a spirit's tongue and tear
Would touch my body with what my mind could feel,
'Tis better thus, else my thoughts would be my bier
To bear these vain misgivings of the unreal
The moon-illumined clouds which o'er our brief night steal.

Alone, alone the sages did descend
Before my dim and overweening eyes,
And drew me to their thrones, like stars which bend
From their spheres to minister the newborn sighs
From buds which court their dewy progenies:
E'en now my heart is nature's sacristan
Painting her woods, waves, rocks with softer dyes
As all within my mind's transforming span
Bequeaths the curving grace denied to me by man.

The petals of my promise shall unfold
And radiate warmth through the frozen air,
Though choked by thorns which leave my tale half-told
I paint the azure breeze in budding prayer,
Extending my untasted fruit to share
Its bower with the Heaven's growing bloom,
Its seed shall rock the winds until they bear
Life's antenatal promise to the womb:
Four crossing stars whose spheres the child shall reassume.

I numbered my ribs and saw twelve furrows on
The sea-ribbed sand, I saw the husked acorn
Bearing our nameless needs, a man's base bone
Sounded to form by the moon's crested horn,
Its hour of death spelled on our dust reborn;
I saw the loves of the dead pierce the soil
And swell in flowers fragrantly forlorn;
I saw all things bear their appointed toil,
They fell to rise again and wear each other's coil.

Why was man formed to feel his spirit's dearth
To gasp, when he could breathe a purer air,
Then fall headlong into the murky earth
Witnessing thought's perdition and despair
Pounding life's brazen portals with his prayer:
Surely 'twas not this inordinate chaos
From which he drew the love which made his lair
Art's tempered dwelling, restoring the loss
When yet unborn he saw the womb's imprinted cross.

I clasp this fading splendour of my youth
When thought's wings up-pinioned with divinity
Dissolved into a breath of melting ruth
And we were hurled, the lorn outcasts which be
The loveliest of the lost, we yet were free
And found a home proportioned to the pain
Which spurned us to ascend beyond the sea
Where waves cannot their beings once reclaim,
Nor hold life's pushing tides from tightening the chain.

For in this dearth there are no absolutes,
None, but love, whose rapturous undersong
Forever affirms what reason half-refutes
Breaking through systems of unrelating wrong
When time gathers a plan and we belong
To the arbitrary notions of a place
A circumstance or any furtive throng
Of woven wills: How often we'd deface
The simple truths that grow from nature's first embrace.

But am I ever thus to rationalize
To find a distant effect from one pained cause
To see all in my mind's circling replies
When we expatiate this void and pause
From diurnal woes, when something overawes
I know not what—but something greater far
Than that which yields to necessity's stern laws
Which bends its glowing breast o'er life's frail bar
And holds fate's cruel reigns pawing to one bright star.

Why is it that we stand in a relation
Now with one, then with other forms of thought
Unless the universe in its rotation
Consists of many spheres from which we've caught
And questioned parts of a whole, forever sought.
Is truth mustered in one mutable age?
Life's cumulative call had sooner brought
(When tortured into forms of sacred rage)
Impressions which outvie time's tarnished equipage.

Steeped within this elemental conflict
We, with our slow ascending breath and hands
Watch our conjured desires as they've ticked
A circle round oblivion's lost lands
Until eternity her legioned bands
Of faith, exhale from life's forsaken flower:
Reshaping our undisciplined demands,
Referring varied dreams to that one power
We've felt with vague regretful glance through each imploring hour.

From our ancestral woes we can distill
A purer essence and to mankind give
A hope beyond the incumbent cares which fill
His atmosphere with brooding clouds—why live
If every pain to time is relative
And seek no further than to half-subdue
The inherited woes we drain as from a sieve
Which time holds to our lips: we must construe
In privation's agony a dream the years cannot undo.

Within, the world's unimagined center
Around the contextual pains which plague mankind
All seen as metaphors with which to enter
The soul's concentered sphere for which we've pined:
Though various arts of reason redefined
The unrelated means which streaked the whole
And each with his own lightning had signed
The murky air: the watchful hours toll
The famished blooms of love are garnered for the soul.

'Tis not that Heaven's breath is soon defiled
Nor thought dragged through its own recreant Hell,
For this in other spheres is reconciled,
'Tis rather that man's nature could compel
The years to cancel truths our souls would tell,
Like buds which fold before they half unclose,
'Tis love, that in the heart's unfathomed well
But dampens, 'tis the hope that ever grows
From vernal grounds which push to autumn's sere repose.

Why do we have the grace to oft behold
The soul in bloom ere time her snows receded,
When all which now before our sight is rolled
Attracts our fresh desires unimpeded
To wreck against the forms to which we've speeded,
Half-auguring with many doubtful joys,
With cold repulse by stronger pain succeeded,
Why seek in love an image which alloys
Itself with the imageless, and sooner love destroys?

Why, because the soul in breathless mountings blest
Would kindle sister sighs and woven wings,
And soar to Heaven's unascended nest
Where live the mind's untold imaginings;
Would melt into a breath of glowing strings
With one whose beating heart's an undersong;
Would look on mountains, and from common springs
The latest looks of love in tears prolong,
Would mix sweet talk with setting suns above the crushing throng.

These passions pain our stifled hearts to gasp
Then seek below, in one, a lesser light
Than that for which our upturned hands did grasp,
Though lesser, it is a point where we unite
Love's mutual desires, as from a height
Inaccessible a foaming torrent roars
Into a valley's breast, catching in flight
The flowers that bloomed beneath its mossy floors,
To flourish by eternal seas beyond desires' shores.

These tear-torn lashes warily unclose,
As dawn subdues the clouds' departing knell,
And with her nodding fingertips of rose,
Chastens their cowering forms, as if a bell
Had called to being all elements which swell
With sacred light, to rank their legioned beauty
Against decay, and flash their invincible
Lightnings, born of these very storms which free
In sense of things external the mind's distemperancy.

Yet there is an immedicable pain
Born when time his quivering seed implanted,
And thus defined what evil dare not stain,
By contrast with decay; and while man ranted
Beneath this plague, his heart had enchanted
A dream of beauty which broke through his despair:
Though many on reasoned systems descanted
And left untasted life's fruit, although they'd share
The loss of those who fell from hope's suspended stair.

What life were this, to temper not the dawn
With the dews which are kindled in my eyes,
To paint in thought these elements so drawn
Forth from a thousand variegated sighs,
With the love I drink from far remoter skies
Than these which touch the leaves with ashen gray:
The pale breath of my hope before me flies,
Like snow, which sifts thought's embers as they lay
Beneath our drifted needs to bloom another day.

I live not in time, but it lives in me,
These clouds, the wild similitudes of sky
Imperfectly drawn across my fancy flee,
But dare not diminish dawn's crimson sigh
With a lesser light, yet I know not why
On spells of a remoter star I've ridden,
Rather ask why men toil and grieve and die;
It is a light, like love, which comes unbidden,
Freeing, as the sun the dew, harmonies long hidden.

This world is of my mind an instrument
On which the inspired spirit can sweetly play,
Attuning the discords which wildly rent
Earth's wavering strings, to a gentle lay
And chasten mind in reason's sad assay
To spread its wings to our heart's tuneful token,
Then harmonies unseen before array
Like music, when no more can be spoken
They leave the charmed soul still, the listening heart unbroken.

The mountains woo their images into clearness,
How calm they seem in these duplicate deeps,
Even the grazing goat struck by the sheerness
Of their precipitous heights and untrodden steeps,
Further adown the valley windingly creeps;
And the sea itself, like an inverted sky
Possesses its own array of stars, and sleeps,
A slumbrous interval of waves; On high
The clouds like measured scales of music wander by.

And all this swells within my lifted throat,
Words that fall before the faith they would express,
Yet still my accents bear the silver note
From springs which oft will disentwine a tress
Of melody, and temptingly caress
From our pale hearts the cherished hopes they hold;
Then half-surprised at our own loveliness,
With fervent sighs and symbols overbold
We vex our silent souls whose truths remain untold.

Arise oh Children of my thought, cherished
Progenitors of dream, heart-engendered
From these nether regions where has perished
The patriot's zeal, whose mutual good was rendered
Irreconcilable and all is blundered
Beneath the sick moon's half-unclosing eye;
Where the divine feelings of youth are sundered
When every wind became a spirit's sigh
Paving immortally the clear thought cloven sky.

Chorus of Spirits:

Strophe A:

Living to embrace fond joy
Man would his very heart alloy
With his fragment of human life,
If not for that incessant strife
Which assails the human heart
And does the veils of beauty part
Revealing for the staggered eyes
That light which ever-intensifies
As man and beast and sea and air
Its ever-mantling glory wear:

From the cold earth's dark recesses
Where the still snow plaits her tresses
Of age upon the wintry mold
And the gazing moon too soon grown old
Casts her silver sighs around
Withering all without a sound
Til every branch does seem to borrow
The light of her remoter sorrow,
Summoned by the outward signs
Through which the dauntless spirit shines
By your silent-straining lips
Hushed by nature's fingertips,
By the sad and solemn line
Of your mournful eyes decline,
By the pallor of your cheek
Like the sun's declining streak,
By your earth-altering eyes
Which these dank ruins imparadise
We have risen in like wonders
Brief as flashes through the thunders
Like an unsuspecting rose
On which the winds of winter doze
Or a waterfall whose sighs
Freeze as fast as they arise,
Even as star stifled waves
Leap above their watery graves,
Then heed the uanccustomed beat
Of our lightning sandalled feet!

Antistrophe A:

The dew from our sapphire urns shall dimple your despair
E'en as the hollow cheeks of clouds soft-fondled by the air
With florid blush replenish skies which seen from far below
Seem bluer far as fringing clouds close on recurring woe:
And thus your unrepentant woes their sorrows shall prolong
Till time soft-nibbles to the honied center of our song.

Strophe B:

Even as a noiseless flower
Expands in Spring's ebullient dells
Let the quiet of this hour
Keep you with its solemn spells:
Though shifting embers of the skies
Draw your heart-engendered sighs
Till twilight's insubstantial dreams
Protract hope's unreclaiming gleams,
Thought softly sighs the western star

And the clouds are like a golden bar
Of adamant against the sun
Know that this most lovely One
In the odour-tide of morn
O'er richer vales than these is born
While perfume-pillowed clouds of noon
Prepare him for his summer swoon:
We weep for your heart's mournful pride
Which holds the nets through which there glide
An intensity which like this sun
Burns through the clouds he rests upon.

Antistrophe B:

Like a comet's carving bright
Seen above the herbless plain
Illumines with its restless light
Barren fields of withered pain.

So your thoughts which float above
Are seen as such by those below,
Like sighs of long attending love
On graves where winds sweep leaves of woe.

These weeds of man's immediate sphere
To set a metaphor aright
We see as gardens which uprear
Their blooms beyond time's furthest height.

For tis through pain love finds her lair
And bursts with instantaneous sense
A beauty breaking through despair
To image thought's omnipotence.

We know your wordless wants accord
With more than that which we've assayed
Of raging rhymes in iambics stored
The tongueless eloquence of a dream displayed.

But we our sparkling song prepare
And draw one vision down each stream
Sent by your spouse with whom you share
The joy which palliates life's dream.

And through the rainbow which we kindle
Illumined by One light divine
Your heart from grief to calm will dwindle
To feel our hearts have moved in thine.

1st Spirit:

All mythologies shall fall
As the mind shall disenthrall
Itself from circumspect of pain
And evil's ever-spreading stain;
As endless systems re-illume
A portion which their peers consume:
Some shall search the human will
In false detachment and thereby kill
Evil—this first would seem a gain
Suspending us from guilt and pain,
But no—the worlds which we define
Are fulgurations of the mind,
And the rules which we appraise
Which govern all our mortal days
Are appended from our birth
Shaping our visions of the earth.
Why is it that we could not see
In midst of this debility
Our fiercest pang which somehow rent
Imagination worn and spent.
But we can ourselves detach
Not from passion but the snatch
Of time and place and circumstance
Whose maddening rhythms mar the dance
Which we dancers ever feel
Though dialects would oft conceal.
We rise above the stern process
Of intentions' turgid stress
We see apart, we catch the call
Which quickens in the throat of all
And place a single coronal
O'er the hearts which long have trod
This varied earth, beat by the rod
Of their place or of their time
Till all this in the poet's rhyme
Would be eclipsed until all see
The heart is the sole reality.

2nd Spirit:

Ere love's theme-thirsting undertone
Dissolve before recurrent moan
We gather blooms of full-blushed sound
Like timorous streams that fall adown
With careful pause and sprightly leap
Pavilioned hills where Pan does keep
With treble breath his pipe awake
As cool as tumbling rills which break
In liquid stops when music clear
Halts the steps of wanton dear.
Though through dank chords our numbers shiver
There sounds a note that will deliver
To the secret listener
All the truths his heart aver.
Our crystalline libations fall
From caves frequented by the call
Of distant trumpet when the mountain
Thaws the first of spring-time fountain,
Until those gathering preludes sweet
Subside in music's crystal beat
And fall to half-accomplished seas
Which mummer soft-lipped prophecies
Of when the islet-barring main
Shall no more their might contain.
List when evening winds uprise
And summon soft responsive sighs
Along the grass when every blade
Repeats the prayer her sister made:
Let this free your heart's distress
In a tuneful quietness
And range the voluptuous scale of sorrow
Which beauty's self does ever borrow.

If this blest moment could but half-remit
The insurmountable power which I would praise
Then I could speak, and subtly interknit
A rich embroidery of words to daze
The unavailing mind to shrink—then gaze
With passion's inextinguishable eyes
Upon those lidless orbs which softly blaze
Through this world of things, e'en as smiling skies
Temper with cooling breath the earth's feverish sighs.

For I've forgot the blue beyond these trees
In calculating laws which would dissolve
Under the waves of ministering seas
Which plant their stars, swelling as they revolve
Back to their emerald thrones: I absolve
This wrestling with the world's unwilling mass
For thoughts which my heart sooner could resolve:
Thus I should leave these sickly signs and pass
To a remoter truth, above occasion's blast.

And I have tried to tame these varied hues
Of thought, to systems circumscribing life,
And collect the drops of light which wide diffuse
Throughout our atmosphere's turbulent strife
To one fixed rainbow, and with reason's knife
Trim the untextured blotches which could allay
That comforting light: but nought avails, my wife
Though she dwells afar and seems to smile away
These clouds of reasoned hope which blot love's golden ray.

My wife: the intensest bliss we shared recalls
The seed I planted in love's wounded side,
And in her vales, lit by dim waterfalls
Arose to hear hope's star-encinctured tide
Sweep through on music's swell, then half-subside
To leave that lingering need, which made them grow
And lift their shining faces as they sighed
Cheerfully into the morning's fragrant flow
Offering their humble sweets on all that breathed below.

And here were sacred paths where pale distress
Would pass her sighs to flowers which renew
The dawning blush of their own loveliness
Dyed in the Heaven's ministering dew;
Here branching elms whose tresses were thrilled through
With sunlit combs, would share a secret commerce
With the skies; here the earth from which we drew
Our plagues seemed welcome portion of a curse
Which kindled quenchless songs throughout the universe.

A portion of earth's undeclining youth
Whose branches bowed before her tenuous tread,
And when our lips cancelled a tongueless truth
The laughing clouds would echo overhead
All the listening soul had left unsaid.
And music like a slave would murmur of
Her presence, and every blushing bloom would shed
Her modest robes; a light as from above
Had tuned the hills to grace the harmony of love.

Our songs again shall be the spirit's shelter
Arrayed with all which man has sought without
When in his inmost being there would welter
Longings which for the striking rod would spout
Filling the void with his soul's joyous rout:
But now this ill-requites us—let us crave
As love's suffusing eyes for distant shout
Of home-returning shepherd, One to save
Our long unchannelled wants which hold us as their slave.

The propheeies within now spread before
The questionings without now flee behind
The breast which nursed my childhood in its store
Is lost, but recreated and defined
In measures which embrace all humankind;
For I have learned though time the soul encumbers
'Tis time in which our dreams have been designed
When anguish poured forth in prophetic numbers
Had caught the love which strays like smiles o'er infants' slumbers.

Within my heart I feel the lightnings leap,
Cascading down the clouds the rainbow stream
Carries from out my soul where it did sleep
The variants of a recurring theme:
Love moves not in itself, but in the dream
Interpreted through mankind's endless moan
And not unwept for, but found as we redeem
(Lost in our silent intervals alone)
The furtive feeling of an undeveloped tone.

The extended hand flowering through the snow,
Blushing through, like the dawn's wavering light,
Wavering through cries of, "All things must flow
Through circumstantial want in maddening night,
Delivered by nought, though kindled in flight
By their unknowing transit, all in One,
Which sunders our unapprehending sight
And falls like light our disquietude upon
And tempers all beneath its universal sun."

The vital variations of my heart
Respond and know they never were alone.
That dissoluting sense when clouds do part
And every flower feels a brighter tone
Pulse through its petals, like the odourous zone
Circling love, we are refracted fragments, bound
By the light which has given us birth: the stone
On which I stumbled exists but in its sound,
Now falls my river within to the spreading sea around.

Chorus of Spirits:

Oh golden globe of dew in sunlight dreams,
Oh silver sailing wave without a shore
Your congregating thoughts in tearful gleams
Shall assemble now to weep, oh nevermore:
And all images which partake of One
Shall rise like dew enkindled by the sun!

—Stephen Gurney

Noah, After Divine Reconsideration

It is upon us; the flood is upon us. Take to ship
if there is a ship; because, most certainly,
the flood is upon us, or it seems to be;
or, at least, the western sky is darkening,
with no light coming from the east horizon,
or, at least, if there is a light, it is too early
or we are too westerly to see it yet.
Take to ship, if there is a ship. I think
I see rainclouds, or I think it feels like rain,
or my grandmother says it feels like rain. She is seldom wrong,
or rather, she is often right. Was there someone assigned
to regulate boarding, if we are to board?
It is awfully cold for rain. Can one drown in snow?
Should we board farther south, does anyone know,
or stay here and take to snowshoes?—that is,
if the flood is upon us. The sky seems dark,
and birds are ricocotting southward; the sky is full of birds,
Perhaps, after all, it is they who are causing the darkness,
Or perhaps I was right in saying the flood is upon us,
in which case, we should definitely take to ship.
Was anyone assigned
to find one, or build one? But this dampness could be the coming
of morning dew, if there is indeed a light
out of the east; it may be too early
or we may be too westerly to tell
if day is coming. Was anyone assigned
to announce the difference between day and drowning?
If so, perhaps we should set out to find him,
or perhaps we should set out to see if we should take to ship
if the flood is upon us, as it almost appears to be.

—L. S. Gordon

My Answer, My Love

Requiem-cawing
(at dusk)
old lady Moira girdled with black leather jacket
stoplight-idling in a napalmed VC jeep
set me up well for dawn's watery
trigentapede
crawling at the base of porcelain cliffs,
frantic,
crawling frantically faster, its
body beautiful motion
swishing
down the
water-
drain
leaving me a three minute vigil
for no Resurrection
that I knew wouldn't;

but not for your noon letter
(happy surprise) which
blew the blinds back from the windowsill
bringing a cadence of surging leaves on autumn freshness,
seas of leaves like the open opera you and I saw just
like now
with surging leaves,

only
Verdi was unchanneled,
the breeze wasn't cut off by blinds crashing,
you did not tell me, then,
that you are dead,
while banging blinds sprew gusts of broken leaves,
(and)
dead Verdi sings through sleeping tenors
who won't hear my applause to
"let me" kill in clapping
) *let me kill in clapping* (
this one-man-audience's fear of
banging-windowsills
that will keep him from the wake
(though you expecting will think it strength and pride
never to know the ache
of) a coffee-table with broken match-stick legs
squished flat against a wooden floor,
its
glass top busted.

—*Bart Gruzalski*

The season sinks beneath the cobblestone
Warmth and its red are gone below the harbor
And the bay is growing ice upon itself.
And the park streets around this monument
White and icicular, are also crystalline, no longer flowing.
We no longer flow between two points
Mixing in each other, diaphanous and winsome.
We are two points, a tegular pair
Beaten in a stare of parallels.
The monument is no longer my sense of your time.
The street no longer my traffic. Sound ceased
And all rhythm robbed and winter come with breaths encased.
Yet in this silence, there hangs one grace—
Lurid drop from the wine of celebration:
The last vibration of your handsome touch
That fell in an arc away. My head
Still sways, cymballed in that brush
That left behind all that it hopes.

—C. J. Sharlip

"Run silently — please"

(you mustn't disturb the flowers)

"They're dead you know"

We arrived cold, but breathing hard
in Winter.
Sad that, suddenly, our quadrisections
were only on paper as
vegetations
on mauled cloth with pigmentation
as Winter
our
Season.
December, comes blooming
when after 'Thanksgiving'
we arrange our
corpses in rows.
Winter
an exaggerated
angle with the sun,
faintly suggesting
that death is a
slight deviation
in direction.
Now
    Do you remember
Do you understand, now, yellow
bonnets worn atop the head
on Easter Sunday and, oil
pastels on crepe paper balls
at Christmas.

—*L. Wildberger*

GONERIL

We suffer from a lack of inevitability here.
I should have been the fated one, the wronged one, the great one
to die out of grief and passions, not out of hunger.
I know how to love as strongly as he and feel its anger.

I would eat his pain whole, and have it roar up in me and kill me,
but do not know how. He, who is only stupid,
and old, and without hatred, is allowed
hard intercourse with madmen and beasts and lightning.

He bred me up too prettily; I have forgotten
the child in me who ran to hide in wet caves,
who wore dirt from the ground; I was bred to a mask that holds me
to muffled antagonisms.

He challenges the whole universe. He will be defeated
much more easily than I would be, if I had clothing
to stand the storm; I would scream at the bastard lightning
until it tore me in two for anger and pleasure.

I would scream louder than thunder and have it deny me,
deny to obey me. From the love
of a *black panther*, I would have it claw me;
its claws could not hurt what its hot tongue had taken.

I am not allowed. I am only this proud, to deny him my comfort,
and give the accidental privilege: that he goes mad and bestial in
my forest—
mine, that he called me out of when I was a child,
that he called me out of, to come in by fire and shelter.

—*L. S. Gordon*

Fate?

The hours come to one old man
With consolations of regret.
Like wooden dishes from a farm
Abandoned to the snow and wet,
They lie unused upon his floor,
Discarded, as the timbers rot
Where voice and foot once joined in play.

"These hands fought against the blight.
But now they fight against despair,
As though still capable of this."
They won't repair a broken voice,
Or grant a compensating bliss.
A hand begins to tremble, cold
Because of age. What can it write
For a son who married wealth?
Why would it mark, in feeble light,
Those images that fade through fog?
"I worked, but now I am alone."
Nought else to say. Despite loose dreams,
No songs arrive that once have gone.

Torn nails, brown as dirty glass,
Can plow the furrows in his flesh,
But cannot grapple with his plight.
Old men are trapped within a mesh
Designed, as he believes, by fate.
(And who's to argue with him now?)
Since childhood, he earned his bread
Through obligation's sombre vow.

Late shadows spread along the ground.
He looks outside. Too late, too late.
His mind begins to drift with clouds
That hide the stars from human fate.

—*Gary Imlay*

(downlight)

You know
it's
nice
walking
downlight—
you
grow
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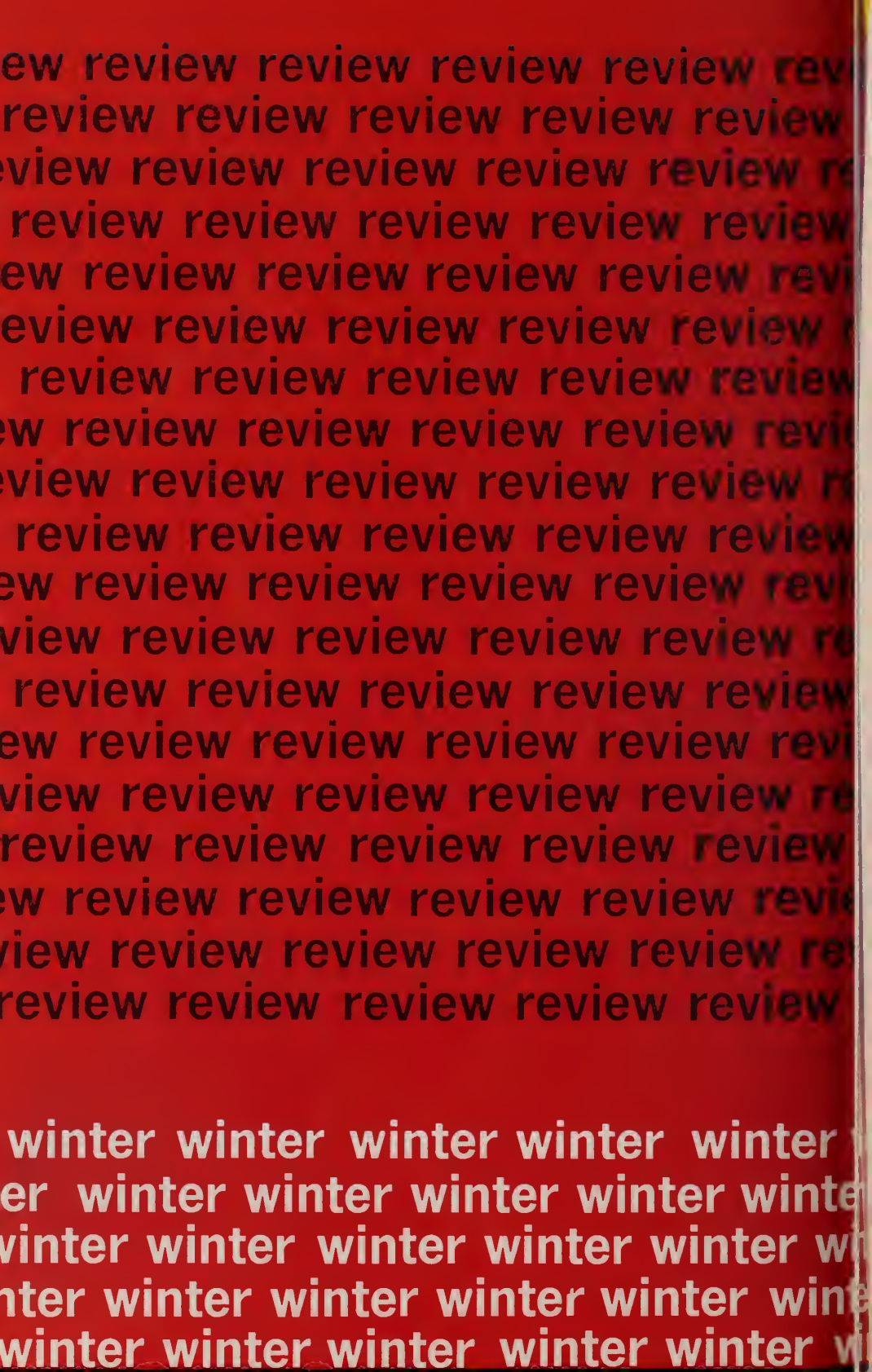
—Bart Gruzalski

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Calvert Review once again announces a

WRITING CONTEST

Forty dollar prizes will be awarded for the best fiction and the best poetry of the year. Twenty-five dollars will be awarded the best essay and fifteen dollars will be awarded the best art contribution. Manuscript guides are available in the Calvert Review office, Room 206 in Sylvester Hall or in the English Department office. The contest is open to undergraduates; academic staff members are not eligible.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